



State of Vermont

Department of Libraries Agency of Administration

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TO: Vermont Public Librarians and Community Librarians

FROM: Sybil Brigham McShane, State Librarian

DATE: September 2, 2003

RE: Standards Applications – Fiscal Year 2004

Enclosed are copies of Minimum Standards for Vermont Public Libraries and necessary application forms. A library must apply each year in order to be considered for standards. As you may know, the Vermont Board of Libraries approved revised minimum standards in late 1998 which need to undergo the Legislative Administrative Rules process and may become official in 2004. Therefore, this year public libraries may again meet either the 1986 standards or the newer, 1998 version.

Forms should be reviewed, completed and returned to the Department of Libraries by **November 3, 2003**. ***All libraries - whether applying for standards or not - should complete and return the Public Library Report in order to remain eligible for Department of Libraries services, to be listed accurately in the Vermont Library Directory, and to receive interlibrary loan and other materials in a timely manner.***

We have received a number of questions this year about what the Department considers “basic service” and other practices related to determining whether libraries meet standards. To help answer some of these questions, throughout the application forms, you will notice notes similar to the following:

Note: It is the practice of the Department of Libraries to define "basic services" to include all items a library circulates (e.g., print and nonprint materials), reference service, interlibrary loan, programming (except for recovery of the cost of materials), and public access computing including internet access

Note: It is the practice of the Department of Libraries, in determining per capita tax support, to include the populations of all municipalities providing tax support.

Note: It is the practice of the Department of Libraries to require that interlibrary loan service be provided free of charge and without restriction to all registered borrowers. Voluntary donations may be solicited.

We hope these notes will clarify long-held procedures.

What's the benefit?

The Department of Libraries and its Board of Libraries feel that the standards program offers a useful tool for self-evaluation and improvement. Public libraries that meet standards are again eligible to use the Vermont Centralized Card/MARC Service which provides free cataloging in card or computer format for new acquisitions and makes materials readily available for interlibrary loan via the PUBCAT database on VALS.

In addition, libraries meeting standards are eligible for grant programs that can significantly enhance service to your community. In the coming year, we anticipate at least the following programs: Smith grants for children's services, public access computer grants, and connectivity grants.

Who may apply?

Any Vermont public or community (joint school-public) library may apply for standards, which represent a basic level of service as defined by the Vermont library community. The number of libraries meeting standards has risen from 42 in 1972 to 131 in 2003, with 83 libraries meeting the 1998 version. Even if you feel your library does not meet them, going over the standards application forms at a board meeting may help you set specific targets for the future. You may be surprised to find how close your library is to meeting them!

If your library consistently meets standards, we encourage you to explore "Envisioning Excellence," a Department program designed to recognize libraries that have developed long range plans to go beyond the minimum that the standards represent. Libraries' completed plans are reviewed by peer libraries before being recognized as "Envisioning Excellence." This year we are again offering a "fast track" application for "Envisioning Excellence" libraries.

What if we don't meet standards?

If your library applies for standards and is found not to meet them, you may request help from the Technical Assistance Team (TAT). The TAT will include a member of the Board of Libraries, a Department of Libraries consultant, and a public librarian or trustee from your area. They will help your board and librarian develop a written Standards Action Plan, with specific steps and a timeline for meeting standards during a period of no more than one year. While you are working with the TAT, your library will continue to be eligible for the services that the Department of Libraries provides to libraries meeting standards. In 2003, one library took advantage of this program.

How can we get help with standards?

If you have any questions about filling out the forms or about standards in general, don't hesitate to call Marianne Kotch, Director of Public Library Support Services, 828-2320. She or your regional librarian will be happy to come to a board meeting at your library to explain specific standards and help you find ways to meet them.

A set of the following is being mailed to each public and community library:

- pink sheets - 2003 Public Library Report form. Please attach a copy of your library's annual report from your town report to this form, and even if your library does not plan to apply for standards, return this form promptly.
- white sheets -
 1. Minimum Standards for Vermont Public Libraries, 1986
 2. Minimum Standards for Vermont Public Library, 1998 revision
 3. General application instructions
 4. Guidelines for applying for standards as a group
- green sheets - Standards Application Form based on 1986 standards
- blue sheets - Standards application Form based on 1998 revised standards
- buff sheets - "Fast track" application for "Envisioning Excellence" libraries that have met standards consistently
- white sheet - Suggestions for Further Development (optional)
- white sheet - Resources for meeting standards, including handouts and bibliographies available

Please note that in the past we have sent application forms to both the libraries and the trustee chairs. This year because the packet is so thick, only public libraries are receiving application forms to be completed. Trustee chairs are only receiving narrative sets of standards. Additional forms are available from Marianne Kotch, Director of Public Library Support Services, 828-2320, and are also available at the Department's website <http://dol.state.vt.us> under "Librarians' Resources."

Timetable

The Board of Libraries has approved a schedule for the application, approval and appeals processes, as well as compliance dates for individual standards. Most of the standards are to be met by October 15, 2003, unless otherwise noted. The time schedule for application and approval is as follows:

Oct. 15, 2003 - compliance date for standards that do not have to be met in the last completed fiscal year

Nov. 3, 2003 - application deadline (postmark date)

All completed forms should be signed by the librarian and the board chairperson and returned to Marianne Kotch, Dept. of Libraries, 578 Paine Tpke. N., Berlin, VT 05602

Dec. 16, 2003 - Board of Libraries meets to determine which libraries meet standards

Dec. 31, 2003 - Department of Libraries notifies all applicants if they meet standards or not

Jan. 31, 2004 - Deadline for receipt of appeals from libraries found not meeting standards

Feb. 17, 2004 - Board of Libraries holds public hearing on appeals and makes recommendation for final decision by State Librarian and notification by Feb. 24, 2004

Please remember: ***All libraries - whether applying for standards or not - should complete and return the Public Library Report along with a copy of its annual town, city, or village report in order to remain eligible for Department of Libraries services. Thank you!***



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FY2004 MINIMUM STANDARDS APPLICATION General Instructions

1. Please complete the pink 2003 Public Library Report first. You will use the figures on the report to complete your library's standards application. The information should be for your library's last completed fiscal year, which may have ended as early as Dec. 31, 2002. *Please be sure to attach a copy of your library's annual report from your town, city or village report.*
2. Libraries may meet either the 1986 or the 1998 standards. Even if your library doesn't meet the 1998 standards this year, we encourage you to fill out and return the application form so that we may help you meet them over the coming year. The application form based on the 1986 standards is green; the 1998 blue. "Envisioning Excellence" libraries may dispense with both 1986 and 1998 forms and fill in only the "fast track" (buff) form.
3. Returning the "Suggestions for Further Development" checklist (white) is *purely optional*, but we welcome the opportunity to help you meet these items as well.
4. Use the 2000 census figures for your municipality's population when calculating per capita. If more than one municipality supports your library financially, add all populations of supporting towns together. If your municipality is served by more than one library, discuss the population figure with Marianne Kotch (828-2320) if you haven't already done so.
5. Completed forms should be signed by the librarian and trustee chairperson. Make a copy for your files, and return the application(s) and Public Library Report by November 3, 2003 (postmark date), to Marianne Kotch, Dept. of Libraries, 578 Paine Tpke. N., Berlin, VT 05602, along with any of the following *not already filed* with the Department of Libraries:
 - ☐ The library's ADA self-evaluation and transition plan (1998 standards only)
 - ☐ Written procedures for patron safety (1998 standards only)
 - ☐ Sample publicity and promotional materials
 - ☐ Library policies, including:
 - ☐ statement of purpose (mission)
 - ☐ affirmation of principles of intellectual freedom
 - ☐ confidentiality of library records
 - ☐ collection development guidelines
 - ☐ personnel
 - ☐ nondiscrimination (1998 standards only)
 - ☐ Job descriptions and performance evaluation instruments
 - ☐ Library board by-laws (1998 standards only)
 - ☐ The library's long range plan (1998 standards only)
 - ☐ Anything else you feel supports the application
6. If you have any questions or need extra copies of forms, please don't hesitate to call Marianne Kotch at the Department of Libraries, 828-2320. Extra forms are also online at <http://dol.state.vt.us>, click on "Librarian's Resources."



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